

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4952

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 1301

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS SF

SUBJECT: THIRD DAY OF SOWETO DEMONSTRATIONS

1. THIRD DAY (AUGUST 6) OF SOWETO DEMONSTRATIONS SAW CONTINUING EFFORTS OF STUDENTS TO DRAMATIZE THEIR PROTEST (OVER POLICE DETENTION OF FOUR STUDENTS) BY TRYING TO PREVENT SOWETO RESIDENTS FROM GOING TO WORK IN JOHANNESBURG. SEVERAL EXITS FROM SOWETO WERE BLOCKED IN EARLY MORNING BY WRECKED CARS, BUT TRAINS AND BUSES WERE RUNNING NEARLY NORMALLY AND JOB ABSENTEEISM IN JOHANNESBURG EXPECTED TO BE LIGHT. TENSION REMAINS THROUGHOUT SOWETO, HOWEVER, AND ROVING GROUPS OF YOUTHS CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE ROCK-THROWING AND AT LEAST MINOR CLASHES WITH POLICE. ISOLATED INSTANCES OF SIMILAR FLARE-UPS, INCLUDING ARSON, OCCURRING ELSEWHERE ON REEF, FOR EXAMPLE AT KATLEHONG BLACK TOWNSHIP AT GERMISTON (15 MILES FROM JOHANNESBURG), DOBSONVILLE, AND WITBANK.

2. BY NIGHTFALL YESTERDAY (AUGUST 5) A FOURTH BLACK YOUTH HAD BEEN KILLED. HE WAS SHOT BY POLICE IN THE ONE MAJOR CONFRONTATION DURING DAY IN SOWETO'S WHITE CITY

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SECTION. AT LEAST FIVE OTHERS WERE WOUNDED BY GUNFIRE.

POLICE CONTINUED TO USE TEARGAS FIRST AND FREQUENTLY, BUT GUNFIRE WHEN LARGE GROUPS FAILED TO DISPERSE. SURPRISINGLY FEW ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE.

3. AS IN JUNE 16 RIOTS, OTHER BLACKS IN SOWETO THAN STUDENT PROTESTERS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF CONFUSION AND CONFRONTATION TO DO DAMAGE TO BUILDINGS, HOMES, AND VEHICLES, ESPECIALLY BY ARSON. MOTIVES RANGE FROM POLITICAL TO PERSONAL.

4. CONGEN TALKS WITH ADULT BLACKS FROM SOWETO LAST EVENING (AUGUST 5) SUGGEST THAT PARENTS AND TEACHERS HAVE LOST CONTROL OVER STUDENTS, WHO HAVE LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN ESTABLISHED BLACK ORGANIZATIONS AND ARE PRESSING THEIR DEMANDS ON THEIR OWN. DEMANDS INCLUDE, BEYOND RELEASE OF FOUR STUDENT DETAINEES, RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND SCRAPPING OF ENTIRE BANTU EDUCATION SYSTEM. BLACK STUDENTS ARE GENERALLY OLDER THAN WHITES BY CLASS AND CAN BE 19 OR 20 AND STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL.

5. PREDICTION FOR TONIGHT (AUGUST 6) AND THROUGHOUT WEEKEND IS CONTINUING UNREST. THERE WILL BE FURTHER EFFORTS TO DEFY BAN ON OPEN-AIR GATHERINGS, BUT POLICE ARE ON SPOT IN FORCE. BLACK WORKERS RETURNING TO SOWETO FROM JOHANNESBURG TONIGHT WILL HAVE SAME FEAR AS IN PREVIOUS RIOTS THAT TSOTSIS MAY WAYLAY SOME FOR WEEKLY PAYCHECKS. JOHNSON

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